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Labour force participation rate at all-time high

Employment and hours

The trend participation rate increased to a record high of 65.7 per cent in March 2018, according to latest figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

"The labour force participation rate now sits at 65.7 per cent, the highest it has been since the series began in 1978, indicating that the population is participating in the labour market at a record high level," the Chief Economist for the ABS, Bruce Hockman, said.

In line with the increasing participation rate, employment increased by around 14,000 persons. Part-time employment increased by 13,000 persons and full-time employment by 1,000 persons, reflecting a slowing in full-time employment growth.

Over the past year, trend employment increased by 3.1 per cent, which was above the average year-on-year growth over the past 20 years (1.9 per cent).

The trend monthly hours worked increased by 0.2 million hours (0.01 per cent), with the annual figure sitting at 2.6 per cent.

Unemployment

The trend unemployment rate increased slightly to 5.6 per cent in March 2018.

"The unemployment rate has continued to be relatively constrained over the past year, and is still hovering around 5.5 to 5.7 per cent", Mr Hockman said.

States and Territories

Over the past year, the states and territories with the strongest annual growth in trend employment were Queensland (4.3 per cent), the ACT (3.9 per cent), and New South Wales (3.6 per cent).

Seasonally adjusted data

The seasonally adjusted number of persons employed increased by 5,000 in March 2018. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 5.5 per cent after the February number was revised down, and the seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate decreased slightly to 65.5 per cent.

More details are in the March 2018 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). In addition, further information, including regional labour market information, can be found in the upcoming

March 2018 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001), due for release on 26 April 2018.

These publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website: <https://www.abs.gov.au>.

Media note:

- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Communications and Partnerships Section on 1300 175 070 (8.30am - 5pm Monday - Friday AEST).
- The ABS produces trend estimates to provide a more reliable indicator of the underlying behaviour of the Labour Force series. Trend estimates were introduced into the Labour Force series in the mid 1980s and are available back to February 1978. Trend estimates are considered the best indicators of the underlying behaviour in the labour market. See paragraphs 28 to 37 of the Explanatory Notes in Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).
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